

Center for the Study of the Presidency

Announcement



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The Center for the Study of the Presidency (CSP) is pleased to announce a new initiative to focus on the challenges of an Israeli-Palestinian situation by examining the socio-economic issues common to both communities. As Ambassador David Abshire, CSP President, noted, "This is an issue that eleven U.S. Presidents have grappled with and is highly appropriate for a center that studies and applies the lessons of the American Presidency to current and future challenges and opportunities."

Ambassador Dennis Ross of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, who has served so well as a Presidential negotiator in the Middle East, will assist this effort in his new role as a Senior Advisor to CSP. Abshire noted that "As an experienced and highly skilled scholar and diplomat in Middle East affairs, Ambassador Ross is a natural for this project. He has extensive experience in negotiating between parties in the Middle East and can contribute to successful future solutions."

In the medical and public health fields, the Center will draw on the expertise of Rear Admiral Susan Blumenthal, M.D., who served as U.S. Assistant Surgeon General and was the first Deputy Assistant Secretary for Women's Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Dr. Blumenthal serves as a Senior Advisor on Health and Medicine to CSP and will bring her first-hand knowledge of medical and public health issues in Israel, Palestine, Egypt and Jordan to the effort, having organized a Middle East health initiative while serving in HHS. In the scientific area, CSP will draw on its advisors and on Max Angerholzer, Executive Director of the Richard Lounsbery Foundation. The Lounsbery Foundation has supported the Israeli-Palestinian Science Organization, among others. In addition to these academic, scientific and public health efforts, CSP will examine the possibility of using the Internet, interactive gaming (such as the recently released educational videogame on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict entitled *Peacemaker*), and the development of telehealth projects to further the Middle East peace process.

Ambassador Abshire also said that the Center's new effort complements Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's efforts to bring about peaceful co-existence for Israel and the Palestinians with the endorsement of the high level Quartet, composed of the United Nations, the European Union, Russia and the United States. Such a priority was one of the recommendations of the Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group, which the Center co-sponsored and which was initiated by Congressman Frank Wolf, as then-Chairman of the House Appropriations Sub-committee on State, Science, Justice, Commerce and Related Agencies. Congressman Wolf was instrumental in conversations with Secretary Rice and obtained her support for this new project. With Secretary Rice's backing, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is preparing to make a \$1 million grant to the Center for this effort.

This Center initiative is part of several CSP projects on the Middle East, including the establishment of a Foundation for International Understanding to utilize the communications revolution for positive purposes to reach the youth of the world. In addition, the Center also is working to build interfaith cooperation and dialogue in the Middle East. These projects build on a previous CSP study on U.S.-Muslim communications, which was funded by the Carnegie Corporation, Dr. Scholl Foundation and Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation. Ambassador Gary Matthews, formerly at the U.S. Institute of Peace, serves as the Center's Counselor for Diplomacy and project director. Matthews also served as Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs.

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